LOVE LETTERS OF AN IRISHWOMAN

Frank C. Voorhies.

If thou art borrowed by a friend
Right welcome shall he be
To read, to copy, not to lend,
But to return to me.

Not that imparted knowledge
Doth diminish learning's store,
But books I find when often lent
Return to me no more.

Read slowly, pause frequently, think seriously, keep clean, return duly, without the corners of the leaves turned down, and oblige,

Yours truly,

JUSTIN D. HAYES.

Hermansville, Mich.

496

1900 15.00

Justin D. Hayes

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The Love Letters of An Irishwoman

F. C. Voorhies

The
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APOLOGY.

These letters were found by Riley the junk dealer in the dump that is situated just back of the canning factory across the street from McCarthy's lot. These dainty epistles were, no doubt, meant only for the eyes of "Mike", but as the love-letters of kings, queens, jacks and English women have been cast upon the public, we feel sure that Nora will forgive us for handing her "billets-doux" down to posterity in cold, black type.

F. C. V.

Boston, Sept. 1,

The Love Letters of an Irishwoman.

LETTER I.

Mike, my pet,—

Here I am sitting in my boodwar on the third floor using my trunk for a writing desk and as I sit here I can look out my window and see Keegan's goat on McCarthy's lot, calmly chewing a red flannel shirt as he gazes up toward the broad blue dome of the heavens. Oh, that dear goat. I could dash out there acrost the lots, jump the dump and cast my arms around his silky neck, then I could gaze into his dreamy blinkers and kiss him, oh, a thousand times. Why? Do you ask me why I am so moved by a goat, I who have been brought up with a goat in the kitchen most of the time, well better people than me have been moved by a goat before now, and Mike dear, this goat is not like other goats.

When I look at him it brings the vision of your dear face before me. He reminds me of my own true Mike, because he has the same style side board and chin whiskers that my Mike has, the only difference is that his are white and yours are red. Yes, his are white just like yours will be when you have grown to a ripe old age, if you don't fall off a ladder someday with a hod of bricks on your back and break your neck before you have time to get ripe. Some days I get all in a flutter when I think of the perils of your ocupation. I can shut my eyes and see you climbing round by round up to the roof of a house with half a chimbly full of bricks in your hod. One unsteady step and my own boy with the auborn hair would be dashed headlong and headfirst into eternity, but we must not think of such misfortunes, we who are to be so happy together forever, if you can only get a raise in your wages. And when we are old Mike dear, I will be such a good wife. I will fill that little old T.D. for you and pull your boots off for you when you come home from work. You will never have to chase the goats out of the parlor or feed the pigs. I will do all these little domestic duties and you can sit in the kitchen and smoke until dewmsday with never a kick from your Nora. Oh, I can hardly wait until we have a large four room house of our own, Mike. How pretty we will make it look. I can shut

my eyes and see the parlor now. A green sofa, two nice red covered chairs, a beautiful wreath of leaves on the wall and a crayon picture of you and me. When we can afford it we will get one of those bunches of wax flowers or fruit under a glass case to put on a little table. Won't it be divine? I will keep it just as tidy as can be and we will never use it except on Sunday. But no more of this beautiful dream today for I must go down and milk the goat. Be a good boy darling and don't forget to slide into the front stoop easy tomorrow night so the old man won't get on. He always sits in the kitchen. Load of love from

Nora

LETTTER 2.

Mike, my dearest,—

As I take my pencil in hand, dear, I am sitting in my easie chair enskoused in the beautiful fancie pillows that were knocked down to you at Riley's sale, 30 cents I think and as I shut my eyes I try to think they are your knees, my sweet, auburn haired darling, but they are too soft. Your manly knees are the hardest I ever sat on. I tell you, Mike, climbing the ladder makes your mussles like steal. Well, dear you dont know how unhappy I am when you are away from me. I walk around the house with a fidgety feeling just across my stomick, I thought it was because I had been eating qucumbers, but my brother who works for Dr. Smith, says it is a simtom of nervessness. Sure, being that he is working for a doctor. Pat is on to all these diseases. You are never out of my mind, Mike,

and this morning while I was working out in the yard I was thinking how fine you looked in that $15. no more no less suit last night and that same nervessness feeling came across me and I sighed and nearly chocked to death with a clothes pin. Oh, my dear boy, I'd love you even though you were an A. P. A. or didn't belong to the union. Even if you refused to take me to the hod-carriers socials I'd love you Mike. Now Mike when are you coming to call again. You know mother and the old man are going to poor old O'Brien's wake next Wensday night and you can call then. I don't know why they don't like you, dear, except that father don't like red hair. He's prejewiced and I'll tell you why. You know father used to be on the force and in the same ward there were two other cops who had red hair. For some reason, the old man never tells why, these two reddies hated father and as they had a pull the old man didn't hold his job long. Ever since then he has been sour on red hair. If he only knew you, Mike, I know he would like you though. I love you, dear, red hair and all. Tho' your hair had an "orange" hue I'd love you. You are my light-house. I feel like a frail young boat on the great sea of life, looking toward you to keep me from dashing to pieces on the treacherous rocks of adverseness. That last part I read in one of Laura Jean Libbie's sole stirring novels. Now dear I must close this

letter and go down in the yard and take in Mrs. Wilson's wash, that family must have money because Mr. Wilson had three pair of silk socks in the wash this week. He wears three pair of socks every week. Ain't that foolishness and waste, Mike?

Think of me pet and each time you heave a brick in your hod remember that each hour I am away from you pains me as much as if a whole hod full of bricks were dumped on my young heart. Forever and ever

Excuse pencil. Nora.

LETTER 3.

Mike mine,—

Oh, Mike, I am no good any more. My love for you distracts my attention from everything. Love has trickled into my system until I am soaked with it and my thoughts drift to you morning noon and night. You can never realize how my young heart has opened to you like the dandelion on the green grass of our back yard opens to the noonday sunbeams. I am yours, all yours, and god rush the day along when you and I will be buckled together in the holy bonds of conjugal bliss. As Walter Whitman said in his "Pieces of Grass." 'Tell me not in mournful numbers, life is but an empty team.' My life, Mike dear, is far from being an empty team. It is a dray full of happiness, bliss and painful joyfulness. Mother says I am getting sentimental and wishy-washy because I read to many of

those dear ten cent paper covered novels. It ain't that, sweet boy from the Emereld Ile, it ain't that that makes me sentimental. It is that I am wrapped up in my Irish lover. Wrapped up and tied with the rope of true affection. Ah, Mike there still clings to my shirt-waste the dainty perfume you always have. As I turn my head from right to left and back again, I can get whifs of that Navy Cut Plug you always smoke in that pet of a clay pipe I have so often heard you grind your teeth on. That little black pipe you have had so long, Mike dear. Do you love your own little Nora as well as you do that dudeen. I hope so for it would tear my young heart asunder to have anything have more of your affection, your love which I crave so much, than I get. You know you told, oh, oh, please excuse that awful blot Mike, but I always make blots when I write with ink. I know you will excuse it when I tell you how I did it. I was all of a sudden in a tremble sort of spell, no, I didn't have a chill or a fit or spasm, just a tremble feeling and all because I thought I could almost feel your strong arms once more around my waste, the way it was this way. You see the clock down stairs just struck eleven, oh, them strikes, how musical they are when they strike eleven, because as they peeled out the hour of eleven last night you had your strong right arm around my wasp-like waste. Do you remember

what you were whispering in my ear just as the clock struck the hour? These are your words "When we are married, dear, all I'll ask for out of my pay is forty-five cents each Saturday night twenty cents for four mustys at Hooligan's and twenty-five cents for a half pint to bring home on my hip." Oh, those sweet words of love. Now dearest of all, fare the well. I must go down and get brother Pat's stew ready for him. His grub hour is at half past eleven.

Hods of love to my own from

Nora.

LETTER 4.

Mike, Mike,—

Well, darling, this marning I went down town to do some buying. I went into one of those large apartment stores and got all mixed up. I wanted to buy some muzlin with flowers on it for a shirt-waste and it took me two hours to find the counter, and then they didn't know what I wanted, but this ain't love I'm writing, so how is my boy to-day? Something was the matter with you last night, dear, because when you were lighting your pipe you let the wind blow the match out. Something was wrong. See how I watch every move you make? Say, Mike pet, this morning as I walked down town I saw that they have almost every other street torn up and Eyetalians are doing the work. It's wrong Mike, wrong. Them forenors are driving us out and I don't wonder you get indignent. It's a

outrage, sure so it is. And say Mike, dear, while I was in town I saw the State house and it broughtyou before my mind's eye, not because I think you are going to be a polutician, though better men than you have been poluticians, so who can tell, but the reason you flashed before me was because the state house has a golded top sparkling in the sunshine. So have you dearest, my auburn haired pride and joy. How could I resist the temtaton of comparing my man with the grand and stately statehouse. I simply could'nt. Mike have you a temper? I am sure you haven't and that you are always the same dosile dear I know, even though you've got red hair. The reason I speak of temper, dearest, is because father has such a dreadful one. Mother has to put up witn a awful lot and if I had a old man like that I'd paste him with a floor mop. Father just came in in a terrible rage. He was boiling up like an Irish Stew and it happened this way. Father went to a Dago barber shop down town to have his hair sliced and the fellow perswaded the old man that he needed a shave so father told him to sale in. The Dago did. When he had finished scraping the bristles off the old man's fiz, he began to soak him with towels full of red hot boiling water. The old man said the first one hurt and the second nearly killed him. When the Dago put on the third towel the old man jumped up and told him to

stick a fork in his cheek and see if it was done. Then father picked up his hat and collar and went out. The Dago is out 25 cents for a shave and a hair cut. Father hasn't cooled off yet. Now, Mike, dearest of all, you wouldn't make such a fuss over a hot towel would you and you wouldn't kick because I forgot to put dumplings in your soup like father does.

Oh, darling, you will be here in a half hour so I must close this and mail it on my way to meet you. No one could love you like your

Nora.

LETTER 5.

My auborn-haired-own,—

Again I take my pencil in hand to commune with my love who climbs the ladder. When I think of you dear and the sweet words of love you spoke into my ear last night my heart seems to turn over like a buckwheat on the griddle and and as each thought is of you you can see how well done my young heart must be, and love is the flame that burns in the stove of my buzum. Oh, Mike, dear ain't I a sentimental young thing and wouldn't I write love novels though, inspired by your true love. You said in your letter that you thought I must copy some part from novels I am reading, but I don't dear. It all comes from my own little brain and heart. What do you think Mike, brother Jim came home today from New York, where he has been a bell-hopper at one of the swell hotels on Third Avenue. Oh but he

does put on the airs. I felt like slapping him good and dazy when he said "This section of the country is behind the times. We are up-to-date in our section. The Irish run our town." Just as though us Irish didn't run lots of things around here from the police force down to the supreme cort. And he wears the funniest "swell clothes" you ever saw. A dinky little coat with a belt like the dudes over in town wear. I like it because it is short and will give you a good sight on the place to land a swift kick if he hand you any of those fairy tales about New York. He forgets he was born within a rock's heave of the old dump. "Where ignorance is bliss, ti's wise to be foolish" as old Abe Lincoln said, and Jim's the biggest fool I ever seen. How unlike my Mike he is. You, my dear, are like the plasid stream that runs through McCarthy's lots, not because you are always soaked, but because you always move along quietly, gently and easily, with only a gentle ripple of temper breaking acrost your course of life, now and then, caused by some Eyetalian calling you by your front name, or by not getting paid for over time. I am anxiously waiting until I see my boy tonight. I mention your name every once and a while to mother and father and they don't seem to be so hoztile to you as they were. Father said last night "Mike can't be such a bad fellow, after all, He's Irish." If a man is Irish father has a soft

spot in his Heart for him. Ah, Mike, what a soft spot I have in my heart for you. My heart is a regular jilly fish when it comes to softness for you.

The goat is white, The bull-frog green
Such love as mine, you've never seen."

See Mike, I throw my thoughts into verse. Poetry is the respiration of love and my love bursts forth like a flower with its pedals outstretched toward you. A kiss from

Nora.

LETTER 6.

Mike, Mike,—

Who was that girl Elen Casey saw you with last night after you left me? She said you had her in the drug store filling her up with vanilla sody. From the description I think it was Maggie Finnegan. Now, Mike what do you see in that chambermaid. She is a terrible looking piece of furniture. Her hair, oh, such hair, it looks like a shredded wheat biscuit, and her figure it reminds me of a glass of mixed ale. When did you meet her and did you escort her to her house, I mean her shanty. Did you ever see the house she lives in, but of course I suppose you have, there is no telling where you go after you leave me. Her house is like a tool shed and is so small that they have to keep the wash tubs in the yard, if you could call it a yard, its more like

a young dump. Did you have a date to meet her or did you happen to see her by chance? Now that I remember you said you had been working hard all day and wanted to go home and get a good rest. So that is the way you rest is it? Do I love you, but there pet I am doing you an injustice. I know there is some mistake and that you did not mean anything. You told me last night that you loved me better than you did good old musty and I believe you. Such ferver as you put in the word could only come from a heart struck with cupid's dart. What do you think, father gave brother Jim a walloping good licking this morning. I can hear them whacks yet as they struck Jim just below the belt. You know, Mike, that shingles were made in the first place to be laid on the upper parts of houses, but often nowadays they are laid on the lower parts of boys and father did certainly lay them onto Jim. He used up four shingles before he finished the job, I don't know what the trouble was and I don't care as long as Jim got the licking. He's to fresh. He saw me walking with you last night and he asked me this morning who my gentlemen friend was with the crushed raspberry grass on the top of his koko. He was refering to your auborn hair, dear, and I gave him a freezing glance as only a woman can give. I wish he would go back to New York as I am afraid you and I will have trouble with him. He made

me give ten cents this morning for "hush money" or he said he would tell father I was keeping steady company.

Now dearest, let me once more tell you that I am your own true girl and you are my own true boy. My love is like the brook of long fellow. "Onward, onward, half a legue onward" growing and swelling like a sponge in hot water.

Love to my love from

Nora.

LETTER 7.

My dear man Mike,—

You have just this minute left me dearest and I hasten to sit down and write you a letter while my lips are still damp from your kisses. Do you know Mike, you are just as centimental as I am. Who would think a dear old freckle faced hod carrier as centimental and yet my pet my sandy complected son of the green sod, is a regular lover like you read about in novels. The tender words you purr into my ear give me that tremble spell again and again, and then again I can hear the sentences now as they came at me like lump sugar, I remember every word. Here are some of the tender ones you handed me tonight. Oh Nora "I'd rather be a Swede than think you did not love your Mikey." "Nora, my pet, when we are married I will let you have part of what you earn to buy your clothes with," and lots tenderer

than them came my way from your lips. There isn't room here to kronikle all the poetic talk you sift into my little ear. Oh, you are so generous, Mike, so different from father. He is a regular german with his money. When the old man gets a dollar in his claw he holds onto it and never spends it until the woman's face that is stamped on one side is all covered over with wrinkles from age. He has had the grip or fluenza or something all this week and when I asked him what he took for it he told me he took a walk and a chew of Honest Long Cut every morning and a nap in the afternoon. He's to mean to buy medicine and if I didn't make my own spending money over the tub I would have nothing to wear but a smile and a worried look. Really I don't think the old man has spent $1.25 in a lump for the past six years, Poor mother she didn't have as good a thing in the old man when he was korting her as I have in my Mike. The old lady would have chocked to death before the old man would have skweezed out a nickle for a glass of sody water, but my Mike, he buys me ice cream sody only to easy, Well, Mike,mine, I guess it is about time for you just to be turning up Dolan's Alley now, I can see you before me with your manly chest pushed out until that ox-blood shirt looks like an awning and with that two inch pipe in your face, contented and happy, knowing that your Nora sits

in her boodwar thinking and dreaming of you. Oh you confident man. Or perhaps you stepped into Hooligan's to have a musty or two or three for a night cap. If you did you are just saying "Here's how" and blowing the head off of it. Mike, dear, as you blow the light swansdown off of a good old musty ale, think of me dear, and remember that my heart is as light as the bead on a beer every time I look into your blue, Irish googoo eyes and see the love light shining there like an incandecent lamp. Oh, love, let my fluttering heart lay still. Goodnight.

Your pet

Nora.

LETTER 8.

My always Mike —

Just as soon as you left last night, Mike pet, I hurried and wrote you a letter and here goes another this afternoon because I have something to tell my darling. Do you remember how last night your curly head rested on my shoulder and sweet words of love fluttered from me to you and from you back again to me and how we were unconshus of the busy restless world thatwas moving hither and thither on the next block to us. Of course you remember Well as your head rested there on my black shirt waste some of them auborn locks, them golden hairs, unfastened themselves from your dear crown and tenderly grasped my shirt waste and hung there. This afternoon when I put that waste on again I did not notice them but when I went down in the kitchen where mother was taking a pair of father's overhalls away from the goat the old lady looked up and saw them. She picked them off and I feered all sorts of feers but she only said "Where on earth did you get this Christmas tree tinzel at this time of the year?" You can imagine what a releaf them words was to little Nora. She didnt know they were from the head of the dearest hod carrier that ever heaved a brick. Oh, how my heart beat for you Mike, my ownest of owns. It works over-

time every day now because when I think of you it thumps like a pile driver. I feel so light and gay and airy. Do you know, Mike, I think I would like to go on the stage. Wouldnt it be fine for you to love a real actress. Do you think Andrew Mack or Chansey Oilcat would give me work. I have been reading a novel about a actress and she was what they call a "soubrat." She sang and danced and everybody loved her and gave her things to eat and drink. Brother Jim says I am built like a brick chimbley, and to big to be a good soubrat and I guess I am a little bit too heavy to do much dancing but you know cousin Jim who is a jockey. Well, he says he can trim me down so I could weigh in at the right weight for an actress. Just now I weigh 211 pounds and he said if I took off a hundred I'd be all right. Shall I start in to trim, Mike, or do you think you will get a raise soon so that we can get joined by Father McGinnis and settle down. You know we can go to house keeping cheap, nowadays. A dollar down and a dollar a week until the van backs up to the house. That is the way the Kelleys furnished. The van backed up last week. Well, Mike dearest, in two hours I will meet you around the corner and we will once more talk over our future of bliss and I'll give you this letter then as I havent got a stamp. Until eight o'clock, I am with a flutter

Your Nora.

Letter 9.

Mike, Mike.

You know, Mike, that I live near the dump. Well, living so near to it as I have for so many years, I have seen some funny things but you are the funniest I have ever seen. Do you know, my love, that you are treating a certain young maiden in a shameful way. And I am the maiden, young fellow. Drop to that. Here I have opened the front door of my young heart and taken you in only to feel that you are beginning to slide over to the side door and when you get over there you will slip out and around the corner to meet some other old hen on whom you will shower the rain of your love. Something inside me tells me that you are slowly but surely unhitching yourself from me and that the day is not far distant when you will shake a day-day to your devoted Nora and walk across the street and get Father McGinnis to couple you to some other woman. Your actions are what lead me to think this way, Mike dear, and goodness knows I hope I have dyeagnozed the simtons wrong. In the first place when I am with you you do not seem to have the same warm ardor you had week before last. You do not coo the same sweet words in my ear that you used to do. then another thing Mike, you used to write me a letter every two days. Here it has been three days and a half without a line. Now some real centimen-

tal lovers write every day and sometimes they even write to each other like they take medicine—after each meal, but I never asked you to do that. Once every two days suited me because it always takes me two days to read your letters — carrying the hod gives you an unsteady hand and you do not write a very even hand, but I worked your last one out in a day and a half and have been looking anshusly for another every day but none turns up. Of conrse I saw you last night, but I expected a letter, to, never the less. Then again I noticed last evening that you were not the same Mike, the same dear loving boy with the auborn hair, that you was once. Two weeks ago the heat of your love would have fried eggs but last night you seemed more like a pitcher of ice-water. It aint right, Mike my pet, it aint right to lead an unsuspected young thing like me on and then pass the free ice fund to her. I have lost weight worrying about it and about not getting a letter today. I have dropped three pounds and am now down to 208. Its an outrage, so it is, so it is. Tell me that it is a mistake Mike and that you are not going to spern me. If you dont I shall go wild. Such a headache beats in my little brain now that I can hardly stand it and feel that if another day passes without some loving words I shall have to write to the N. Y. Journal and ask Eller Wheeler Wilcox what to do. Your pet. Nora.

Letter 10.

Oh, Mike —

Now I know, Mike, Mike, why it is that your love for me is getting the chills. Ellen O'Brien told me and Mrs. Grundy told her. Now I dont know who this Mrs. Grundy is but Ellen says that the woman knows for a fact that you are in love with and paying attention to Maggie Finnegan. The Grundy woman said you were with her three nights last week and them was the three nights you did not come to see me. I'm on, Mike, I'm on. Oh, what shall I do. I am not so sore to think that you are not for me any more as I am to think that a frozen face like the Finnegan girl could snatch my pray from me. Thats what puts my tender heart through the wringer. And such a looking piece of calico as she is to. Now I'll admit I'm no stunning Back Bay beauty myself but *Miss* Finnegan — Oh my, oh my,— she never could get close enough to a prize in a beauty show to know that there was one. She might draw a prize at a food fair as a heavy weight lobster — but oh that face. And figure — tie a rope around a sack full of potatoes and you have her just as she is. She looks like a number 8 with a cheap dress on. I dont see how you could fall out of love with me and into love with her so quick unless it is because she wears red silk

shoe laces. Is it that Mike? If that's all you should have loved me two days longer because as soon as Mrs. Smith pays me the money she owes me for wash I am going to get *lavender* laces and put them in my boots with the bows at the toes. Then no girl at the Hod Carriers Picnic would be better dressed than me. But no you are impashunt and you let your love grow froze a few days to soon. And such a voice as that Finnegan thing uses when she tries to talk. She sounds like the canning factory whistle when the factory opens up after a three months shut down. She talks so horse that when you hear her at a distance you think she is coughfin. And how did she get her larux in such a condition that her bronkal tubes wont work right — why you know, Mike. You know. She was a cheap waiter in a cheap sandwich depo on a cheap street down town and she lost her voice yelling "Ham" and "Draw one" and "boil two meedyum." Thats how she did it so she did and still you love her and let her take you away from me after I had worked so hard evenings to show you that I needed you for my Lord and master. Never mind Mike, take your chop house has been and fairy chambermaid, take her and be happy. Whatever you may do there will always be a kozy corner in my young heart for you. I will forget my grief by doing as all romantic maidens do after a "affair de cur" that

turns out to be on the bum. I will enlist in a comic opry chorus so fare the well and so long, sweetheart that was.

Yours—onst

Nora.

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